

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Refer: PPB-22
March 1971

REPEAT

SWEDEN DOES NOT BAN FLUORIDATION

Opponents of fluoridation have again circulated information that Sweden has recently banned fluoridation. This is not true. The following are excerpts from a letter dated February 19, 1971, from The Swedish Dental Federation.

"To begin with, I would like to state, that the Board has not taken any action to ban fluoridation. These rumours are partly results of tendentious statements made by professor Arvid Carlsson, for which he has collected some criticism from the Director General of the Board.

"The real situation is, that we have by now in Sweden a law, which permits the different communities to demand from the National Board of Health and Welfare permission to add fluoride to their water supplies. The WHO resolution on water fluoridation, upon which Sweden has agreed, requests that the member countries should actively recommend water fluoridation. At the same time as the Board of Health and Welfare began to consider to take this further step, professor Arvid Carlsson started to write articles against water fluoridation in the newspapers. As professor Carlsson is a consultant to the Board of Health and Welfare as well as is professor Yngve Eriksson, the Board came in a difficult position. It was, of course, not easy officially to neglect one consultant in advantage of the other.

"So, the Director General of the Board arranged a conference on water fluoridation in June with some 40 experts on different parts of medicin (sic) and odontology. During this conference a great number of situations were discussed, in which one could eventually find a harmful effect of fluoride. In no case such effects were even made probable. On the contrary some speakers claimed an advantageous effect in cases of osteoporosis among old people. Professor Carlsson had to end his plead (sic) against water fluoridation by asserting that the epidemiological studies supporting water fluoridation were not new and accurate enough.

"The Director General had started the discussion by stating that it was not his intention that the conference should end in any decision or recommendation. He had arranged this conference, and intended to arrange a later one on other vehicles than water in order to get information on the latest research and opinions on water fluoridation before he decided upon the more activ (sic) recommendation.

"This later conference mentioned took place last autumn. It revealed mainly, that there are today no methods available that are as efficient as water fluoridation, although some interesting research work is going on for instance concerning immunisation.

"The Board of Health and Welfare is now preparing a document on water fluoridation, which is said to be ready towards the end of this year.

"It is absolutely not correct as is said in one of the articles cited by you that the Board of Health and Welfare has 'discovered that it had no really scientific basis for decission (sic) one way or the other'".

Division of Dental Health
Preventive Practices Branch
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

This information supplements information contained in CPB-13, January 1970.